

George Keith's
JUDGMENT,
 CONCERNING
TYTHES
 AND
H A T Honour, &c.

*Taken out of his Observations upon H. M's. Remarks,
 upon his Book of Immediate Revelation. 4th Obser-
 vation. [Which is Suitable to the foregoing Treatise.]*

FIRST, As to *Tythes* (seeing, I think he will not plead a Divine Law for them) the Law of the Nation cannot justly impose them upon us; First, because they were a part of the Ceremonial Obedience, like unto that of Sacrificing of Beasts; and therefore, can no more be imposed on us by any Humane Law, than Sacrificing of Beasts can; which he will readily acknowledge cannot be imposed on us. Secondly, because the Maintenance of Preachers by *Tythes*, is contrary to the Gospel Maintenance and Ministry instituted by Christ, which was to Minister freely, as they had freely received; and when at any time they wanted outward things, to receive what the People who were worthy, did set before them, or freely give them: And thus they were to depend on the faithful Care and Providence of Christ, whose Ministers they were, to provide for them, by opening and inclining the Hearts of the People to supply their necessities. And indeed

indeed I find, that some of the Antient Counsels, did expressly forbid any *Bishop* to receive any outward thing from those who were not in Communion with him, as Namely *Hereticks*, and Excommunicated Persons; and yet the Priests in *England* and other places, after they have Excommunicated our *Friends* as *Hereticks*, do yet urge them to Pay them *Tythes*, and cast them into Prison for denying them, which is a great Scandal unto the Gospel, and doth plainly declare, that such Greedy and Covetous Men are no true Ministers of Christ: And I put it to this Writer, if he thinks that *Paul* would have ever put a Man in the Goal for want of *Tythe*, who laboured with his Hands that he might not make the Gospel Chargeable. Surely this most Antichristian and Covetous practice of those called Preachers, especially in *England*, hath been an exceeding Scandal and Stumbling-block, and is at this Day unto us, and a manifest occasion whereby to observe, that they are not of a Gospel Spirit, who are so Cruel to the Poor Sheep and Lambs of Christ, who dare not for Conscience sake pay *Tythes*, and that it is not Covetousness in us, but Conscience that hinders us, is manifest, who generally Suffer much more, yea, sometimes many fold more, than the *Tythe* is: And as Christ did not provide *Tythes* for his Ministers, so for the first 300 Years at least, they were provided honestly enough without *Tythes*: But since *Tythes* came to be given to the Clergy, they have become Carnal, and Worldly, and Proud, and have minded more the Feeding themselves with the *Tythes*, than Feeding the People with the true Knowledge of God. Thirdly, If *Tythes* were due by the Law of the Nation, yet Originally they did belong unto the *Papists*, and *Popish* Church, for the Church was *Popish* in those Days, when the People and Kings of *England*, gave unto the Clergy the *Tythes*, and the *Popish* Clergy had them in Possession for many Hundred Years: Now being given to them for *Popish* and *Superstitious* Reasons, and upon *Superstitious* and *Popish* Principles, either they Fall, and so belong to none but unto the People who have the Ninths, or if they belong to any, they belong to the *Popish* Clergy to whom they were given; or if it be said, they were given to them not as *Popish*, but unto the Church, and unto the true Preachers and Ministers of Christ: To this I say, if it had been so (as I question, if the first givers made such a distinction) yet to us it is not manifest, that the present Preachers of the Church of *England*, are the true Ministers of Christ, more than those called *Presbyterians*, *Independants*, or any other Sect: And supposing we did pay the *Tythes* unto the *Episcopal* party, what know we, but the *Presbyterians* might seek them to be paid over again unto them; and after them, the *Independants* may do the like; both which, Claim the *Tythes* as much as the *Episcopalians* do: And so, until they give better Proof, that they are more Worthy, and more true Ministers of Christ than these others, we could not in Conscience Pay them to them, although otherwise we were Clear, which yet we are not: If it be said, the present Authority gives them to the *Epis-*

any *copal*; I answer, that if the *Tythes* belong to others, they cannot in justice give them unto them, no more than they can take any other *aliquot* part of my Estate, and give to another Man. And Lastly, I see not how any People or Kings, or Magistrates, in former times, or yet at present, can justly Alienate a Tenth part of my Yearly Increase, which is the Blessing of God upon my Labours, and give it unto others, without my own Consent, they may as well take away a Third or Half of it; for if I pay my *Tax, Custom and Tribute*, for the Maintenance of Rulers and Magistrates (as we do generally, and hold it a Duty so to do) they have no Right to my Tenths, more than to a Third or Half; They never were in their Possession, to wit, the now *Tythes*; as for Example, the Tenth part of this Years Increase in my Field, seeing it was never in Being till now, and when it is in Being, it is mine, as Naturally resulting upon my Labours, by the Blessing of God, as the proper Fruit thereof; and therefore I say, without my Consent, they cannot Alienate them from me, for what was never in their Possession is not properly theirs; we commonly say, *Non entis, nilita sunt Attributa*, that which was not a Hundred Years ago in Being, belonged then to no Man; and therefore no Man could dispose of it without my Consent: As to Lands themselves, I confess the Case varieth, as also unto Farms, payable by Tenants unto Landlords, where yet the Consent of the Farmer, maketh him liable unto his Landlord. But as I said before, so I now say again in good Earnest, the *Tythes* are contrary unto the Gospel, and Gospel Maintenance, and are a real Hurt and Hindrance to any effectual and through Reformation, and therefore ought in Conscience to be Denied; for so long as *Tythes* remain, the World will be full of Hireling Priests, whose God is their Belly; and for One that hath any measure of Sincerity, there will be Ten Hypocrites, who will not Eat that they may Preach, so much as they will Preach that they may Eat: And thus much in short unto *T T T H E S*.

Next as to Civil Honour, we do most earnestly Profess, that we are not against true Civil Honour, both to Magistrates, and all Men Respectively: But as concerning those Gestures of Uncovering the Head, and Bowing the Body, seeing they are a part of our Bodily Worship unto God, who is to be Worshipped with our Bodies, no less truly than with our Souls, we hold it Unlawful to give them unto the Creatures, and do indeed judge it some sort and degree of Idolatry, though the Lord may, and doth forgive it in them who do it Ignorantly, and are otherwise Sincere; and though under the Law, Bowing of the Body was used in way of Salutation, yet under the Gospel it was forbidden, as when *Peter* forbad *Cornelius*, and the *Angel John* to Bow; and even under the Law, *Mordecai* refused to Bow to Proud *Haman*; and certainly we are sensible of it, that it is the same Spirit of *Haman* that would have us now Bow generally, although as to some

some particulars I make an Exception. And whereas he saith, Page 6. *Not to pay Respect according to the Mode of the Country (if it be a Mode that hath no Intrinsic Evil in it) is as if any should refuse to Pay his Debt in the Current Money of the Country, which would be a palpable piece of Injustice.* To this I say, although it had no Intrinsic Evil in it, yet having also no Intrinsic Good in it, but being a thing suppose Indifferent; yet being so generally and so horribly Abused as it is, it ought to be Abandoned; for it is a Maxim, that the Abuse of an Indifferent thing, should take away the Use of it: The Parity as to the Paying of Money is not alike; seeing, in refusing to Pay the Current Money of the Country, we would really Damnify or Prejudice our Neighbour: But in keeping on our Hats, and standing upright before them, we hurt them not, unless it be that we hurt that Spirit of Pride that is in most of them in an high degree. Now to Hurt, yea to Kill the Spirit of Pride, is no Injustice; but rather a Vertue, by refusing to Pay unto it, that which it both Seeks, and by which it is Fed and Nourished.

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